DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 142 958 CS 003 593

AUTHOR Kilty, Ted K.
TITLE A Study of the Characteristics of Reading Programs in Federal, State, and City-County Penal Institutions.
INSTITUTION Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo. School of Education.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 47p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Reading Programs; *Correctional Education; *Corrective Institutions; Participation; Prisoners; *Reading Instruction; Reading Materials; *Reading Programs; *Surveys; Teacher Qualifications; Teaching Assistants; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the characteristics of reading programs offered to inmates of federal, state, and city/county penal institutions. The total number of institutions that responded to a questionnaire sent by the investigator was: federal, 27 (100% response); state, 426 (68% response); and city/county, 675 (16% response). Findings are reported for the following areas: information possessed by the institution about inmates' educational backgrounds; existence of a reading program; grade levels of reading instruction offered; teaching certification and formal reading training of the individual in charge of the reading program; assistant personnel available to the reading teacher; the manner in which inmates become involved in the reading program; the relationship of reading instruction to inmates' work assignments; determination of the instructional methods used; reading materials available; frequency and length of instruction; the number of inmates involved in the reading program in relation to the number of eligible inmates; sources of funding for the program; the existence of records of inmates' progress in the program; and the existence of other educational programs for inmates. A list of recommendations and an appendix containing related material are included. (GW)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED1429

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

MONOGRAPH SERIES

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF READING PROGRAMS IN FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY-COUNTY PENAL INSTITUTIONS

by

Ted. K. Kilty

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Western Michigan University

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS."

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

CS003593

© Western Michigan University 1977
College of Education
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation is expressed to each of the many people who contributed to the successful completion of this study. Mr. Anthony J. Del Popolo, Sr., gave valuable encouragement and direction from the inception. Drs. Jeanne S. Chall and Helen Popp provided excellent suggestions for the development of the questionnaire. Mr. Nathaniel A. Fisher authorized the completion of the questionnaires at the federal level. Drs. John E. Sandberg and Thomas F.Ryan and a foundation which has chosen to remain anonymous provided postage for the mailings and stationery. Mr. Michael R. Hiatt and Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Hoffmann worked many hours on the preparation of the mailings. Drs. Lloyd M. Braithwaite and David W. Adams were kind enough to critique the rough draft of the manuscript. Ms. Mary Francis Fenton designed the art work for the cover. Dr. James J. Bosco arranged for the publication and Ms. Mary Appelhof typed the final draft. Also, hundreds of reading teachers and directors of institutional education programs responded to the questionnaire and wrote explanatory notes that were invaluable in the interpretation of the findings. To each, thank you.

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF READING PROGRAMS IN FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY-COUNTY PENAL INSTITUTIONS

The existence of reading programs for the inmates of penal institutions indicates the presence of a rationale for their very being and characteristics which form the apparent assumptions on which they are operated. A study of the present reading programs, however, suggests that both the rationale and the characteristics may be improved.

The problem of how to treat those who have broken the law has been a difficult question with conflicting answers since the beginning of recorded history. But a synthesis of the various methods that have been tried yields two major philosophies in which the specific treatments have found their bases: Punishment and Rehabilitation.

The value of punishment, as it has been practiced, has been to make the lawbreaker suffer in proportion to the wrong he has committed (although rarely has restitution been the focus), to avenge the injured party, and/or to provide safety for society from the acts of the offender. Thus, punishment was itself its own end. Examples extend from the Biblical record of warning against touching the mount where Moses had gone to receive the Law--". . . he shall surely be stoned, or shot through," to the present, including the recent report of a shift toward punishment

instead of rehabilitation found in the cover story of U.S. News and World Report. (August 25, 1975)

Rehabilitation, however, has ostensibly used the time of punishment to provide the offender with skills and/or attitudes that would enable him to become a law-abiding and self-supporting member of society. If successful, he would not embark upon a lifetime of recidivism. In these instances the punishment would represent the means and the rehabilitated offender the end. Examples of this type of treatment go back as far as the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:23) and again extend to the present, including the recent ruling by U.S. District Judge Frank M. Johnson requiring Alabama to improve the condition of the prisons or face the possibility of being ordered to release the prisoners. It is, of course, within this second philosophy that educational programs in general, and the teaching of reading in particular, have traditionally found their basis.

From the time that New York opened the House of Refuge in 1825 (Carter, et al.:29), the problem of rehabilitating inmates by meeting their needs has been intensified by the unfortunate frequency with which certain aspects of the individual inmate profiles have been repeated and complicated by the unique combination of circumstances that were presented by each offender.

Between 75-80% of the juvenile delinquents in one

study were unable to read materials appropriate to their age and grade level. (Kvaraceus:53) The Director of the Right to Read program, within the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, reports that many of the two million men and women incarcerated or on parole have tremendous reading problems. She notes that large numbers of the federal prisoners barely function at the fifth grade level, even though their educational records indicate that they have completed the eighth or ninth grade. (Holloway:11) Many of the inmates are viewed as educationally bankrupt (Kvaraceus:53), having followed the tragic triad of reading retardation--truancy--delinquency. (Silberberg:19)

Studies by Goltz, Eichron, and Larson have found a positive correlation between reading disability and delinquency. A study by Doll found that only 5% of the boys in a New Jersey institution for juvenile delinquents attained or surpassed the average reading score of their public school counterparts. (Doll:346) And, a more recent report notes that the average reading level of the entire inmate population of four of the largest juvenile institutions in New Jersey is at the fourth grade level. (Holloway:11)

The problem has become so acute that Chief Justice Warren E. Burger said, "The percentage of inmates in all institutions who cannot read is staggering. . . . The figures on illiteracy alone are enough to make one wish that every sentence imposed could include a provision that would

grant release only when a prisoner had learned to read and write." (Holloway:11)

But the corrections programs that have been offered have been little more than a revolving door, according to John Conrad, supervising research sociologist for the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. (Vachon:72) He suggests that:

1. They are expensive.
   The costs of keeping an inmate in prison range from $5,700 to $11,500 per year.

2. They are largely serving the poor.
   A Massachusetts survey found 89% of the inmates were from homes where the family was on or eligible to receive public assistance.

3. They are not realistic in the training presented.
   The instruction is frequently skills vis-a-vis subjects and the skills are often obsolete.

4. They are operated by professional personnel of low calibre.
   Few highly-qualified guards, doctors, psychologists, and teachers will accept the relatively low salaries of prisons and reform schools. (Vachon:72)

If these statements are true, it would appear that a partial solution to the dilemma is a reading program that permits qualified teachers to ascertain the reading level and specific needs of the inmate and then provides adequate materials and instruction to meet those needs.

The results of some of the programs that have been offered are encouraging. Dorney found that juvenile boys who had supplementary reading instruction had a lower recidivism rate than two control groups. He also found that reading

instruction was effective in modifying certain attitudes of adolescent delinquents. (Dorney:438) Miller notes that a positive attitude is a possible immunization against crime. (Miller:184) And Silberberg states that meaningful employment can reduce recidivism. (Silberberg:29)

But the individual who cannot read is virtually doomed to unemployment. In major cities, approximately one-half of the unemployed between the ages of 16 and 21 are functionally illiterate, and this situation is further compounded by the situation reported in a Harris Poll in 1970 which found that 19 million Americans over 16 years of age were unable to read and complete basic drivers license and employment applications. (Holloway:7) Nor is the problem getting any smaller. A current advertisement appearing in national magazines by the Reading is FUN damental organization notes that the number of Americans over 16 years of age who cannot read a want ad has grown to 21 million.

There are others, however, who feel strongly that the rationale for the existence of reading programs for inmates cannot be supported by the rehabilitation philosophy. And, in fairness to their viewpoint, it must be admitted that teaching an inmate to read may, instead of producing a law-abiding citizen, simply return to society a literate criminal. The syndicated columnist William Raspberry states that the financial expenditure of operating prisons amounts to $2.7 billion a year. The return to society, he charges,

is "virtually nothing. Not crime reduction, not rehabilitation, not safety." (Raspberry:1/9/76)

Further, the society to which the former inmate returns can negate the rehabilitation that has been accomplished. Lipton, Martinson, and Wilks note in their analytical survey of research studies entitled The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment that:

> The accumulated evidence in this survey clearly points to the conclusion that regular academic instruction is simply not sufficient to overcome the enormous environmental and social obstacles that interfere with the reentry of "ex-offenders" into the community. Such problems as the response to ex-offenders by employers, by the police, by unions, and even by their own families cannot be overcome by simply improving the educational level of the ex-offenders. (Lipton, et al.:362)

But the lack of statistical proof that one variable--reading--in existing among a variety of variables can produce single-handed rehabilitation is itself not adequate to determine that the offering of reading instruction should be discontinued. Indeed, the above discussion of the rationale for the existence of reading programs which shows that they would not exist where the basis of the incarceration is strictly punishment, and which further indicates that they are viewed questionably where the basis is rehabilitation, suggests that another basis for reading programs would be more accurate. That rationale, on which this study is based, is literacy.

THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to investigate the characteristics of the Reading programs offered to inmates of penal or correctional institutions operated at the Federal, State, and City-County levels which addressed itself to the following major areas:

1. The existence of information regarding the academic level of the inmates, and the source of such information.
2. The existence of a Reading program, and the grade levels of Reading instruction offered.
3. The teaching certification and formal Reading training possessed by the individual in charge of the Reading program.
4. The assisting personnel available to the Reading teacher.
5. The manner in which the inmate becomes involved in the Reading program.
6. The relationship of the Reading instruction to the inmate's work assignment.
7. The determination of the instruction method and the materials available.
8. The time characteristics of the Reading program.
9. The number of inmates involved in the Reading program relative to the number of eligible inmates.
10. The existence of records of the inmate's progress, further education programs, and the source of funding for the program.

The study was conducted by mailed questionnaire, a copy of which is included in the Appendix on pages 41-43. A self-addressed, postage-paid envelope was included with all questionnaires.

The first phase of the study gathered information from the twenty-seven institutions listed on the Education Directory supplied by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Permission to conduct this part of the study was granted by Mr. Nathaniel A. Fisher, Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. A copy of his cover letter is included in the Appendix on page 45. It is noteworthy that responses were received from 100% of these institutions. The initial mailing received a response from twenty-one institutions; a personal, handwritten letter to each of the remaining six institutions elicited three more; and telephone calls to the remaining three brought responses that completed the 100%.

In the second phase of the study, questionnaires were sent to all of the institutions listed in the 1972 Directory of Correctional Institutions and Agencies by the American Correctional Association and Local Jails: Data for Individual County and City Jails based on statistics from the 1970 National Jail Census, U.S. Department of Justice. The two directories were compared by States to eliminate duplication. U.S. military institutions and Canadian Provincial Institutions were not included in the study.

For both the first and second phases of the study, a cover letter was supplied by Anthony J. Del Popolo, Sr., Former President, Correctional Education Association. A copy of this letter is included in the Appendix on page 47.

The total institutional sample was: Federal--27; State--629; and City-County--4110. A second questionnaire was sent to all State institutions that did not respond to the initial request. And the final response was Federal--27 (100%); State--426 (68%); and City-County--675 (16%). Although the figures themselves indicate a high degree of cooperation, particularly at the Federal and State levels, it should also be noted that the study was further aided by explanatory notes on the questionnaires and accompanying letters when the respondents felt that a clearer explanation could be given by doing so.

THE FINDINGS

The total study, as well as the specific areas to which it addressed itself, is based upon the assumption that there are characteristics and conditions that would be most likely to bring about the goal and objective of any Reading program--the ability of the student to read. In the case of inmates, individuals who have attained an age beyond that at which introductory Reading is customarily taught, it was considered basic to know the education background of the inmate. Thus the respondents, in almost all instances the person charged with the administration of the Reading program, were asked 1.) if information regarding the last grade attended were available, 2.) what that grade was, and 3.) the way in which that information was obtained.

It was understood that the last grade attended could not be equated with grade level achieved. But, on the basis of the research correlating inadequate Reading skills with inmate populations, the presence of such educational background data would at least indicate the upper limits of the reading ability.

As will be seen in Table I.A., such information is available to the Reading teacher at a very high per cent of the Federal (F) and State (S) institutions responding. The City-County (C-C) institutions reported much less.

A word of caution is offered in the reading of the tables. The per cents given represent the per cent of the

Table I.A.

Information on Last Grade Attended

	Yes	% Responding
Federal	27	100
State	405	95
City/County	197	29

total sample who returned the questionnaire. Since 100% of the F institutions responded, the figures given represent both the sample and the response. At the S level, however, 68% responded; and thus the 95% of S institutions reporting information on the last grade attended equals 65% of the total sample. And at the C-C level, the 16% responding correlated with the 29% reporting this information equals 5% of the total sample.

It would obviously be improper to assume that all of those who did not respond do not have this information on educational background. But it is reasonable that those who have well organized Reading programs were more willing to complete and return the questionnaire than those who do not. Therefore, any extrapolation to the total samples at the S and C-C levels must take into consideration the probability that the results shown in the tables are the upper limits.

Although the figures in Table I.A. tend to indicate a need for improvement at the S level and a definite weakness at the C-C level, this should be interpreted in relation to

two C-C characteristics. First, the time spent in C-C institutions is typically shorter than the time spent in S and F facilities. In many cases, the C-C institution is a holding facility until the inmate is convicted of and sentenced for the crime. In other instances, the crimes for which the inmate is sentenced to in a C-C institution are less serious than F and S crimes, and the total time of incarceration is correspondingly less. Second, the small inmate population of many C-C jails makes the existence of a Reading program that would serve that facility exclusively a financial impracticality.

The figures relative to the last grade attended were reported variously by the responding institutions. A few apparently gave per cents rounded to the nearest five per cent, most to the nearest whole per cent, and still others to tenths of a percent. In an effort to provide as much accuracy as possible without reporting figures that indicated a greater degree of preciseness than was actually present, the per cents were rounded to the nearest whole per cent. Since the per cents reported represented different inmate populations, the median per cent is shown.

Although rounding of the percents to whole per cents and the reporting of the medians would not be expected to produce linear totals equaling 100%, it may be noted that the totals for the F and S institutions are within 3%. More important, however, is the consistent pattern at all

Table I.B.

Grade Last Attended

	1-3	4-6	6-Below	7-9	10-12	College	7-Above
Federal	5	12	27	30	35	10	75
State	10	20	30	43	25	4	72
City/County	5	25	30	40	50	5	95

levels for approximately 30% of the inmates to report a 6th grade or below education. It is also noted that at least 5% of the inmates at all levels have not attended school beyond the 3rd grade. These figures indicate the need for the inclusion of basic Reading instruction in any inmate Reading program.

The basis for the per cents reported in Table I.B. were test scores, academic records, and statements by the inmates. These results are shown in Table I.C. and are, of course, not mutually exclusive.

Table I.C.

Basis for Highest Grade Statement

	Test Score	Academic Records	Inmate Statement
Federal	56	56	48
State	43	63	45
City/County	7	9	26

Many institutions reported using at least 2 or all 3 of the suggested possible sources. At the F and S levels

Academic Records were used as frequently or more frequently than the other two sources. The C-C institutions reported Inmate Statements as their primary source.

The existence of a Reading program was reported at 100% of the F institutions, 90% at the S level, and 22% at the C-C level. The most positive view that can be taken is

Table II.A.

Reading Instruction Offered

	Yes	%
Federal	27	100
State	382	90
City/County	148	22

that Reading programs are offered in all F institutions, 9 out of 10 S institutions, and approximately 1 out of 5 C-C institutions. This must be balanced, however, with the fact that of 4110 C-C institutions contacted, only 148 responded in the affirmative.

It may further be noted that the 90% of S institutions and 22% of C-C institutions corresponds strongly to the 95% S and 29% C-C which indicated the availability of information on the educational background of the inmate. In virtually every instance, the institutions reporting the existence of a Reading program were also the institutions reporting the educational information.

The grade levels of Reading instruction offered are a

positive finding that emerged. As shown in Table II.B., Reading is being offered at the Basic, Developmental, and Advanced levels. Apparently, the absence of Reading programs in many institutions is a greater problem than a lack of balance in the existing programs.

Table II.B.

Grade levels of Reading Instruction Offered

	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-Above	%
Federal	27	100	27	100	24	89
State	358	84	372	87	326	77
City/County	120	18	121	18	119	18

The results derived relative to the training of the individual in charge of the Reading program tend to support the assertion by Vachon (see above) that the qualifications of those who are involved with penal work are less than top quality. He charges that the corrections programs "are operated by professional personnel of low calibre." And his next statement begins "Few highly qualified guards, doctors, psychologists, and teachers . . . [italics added]." Apparently it is the calibre of the qualifications and professional training and not the calibre of the individual on which he focuses. The findings shown in Table III indicate an area in which improvement is needed. Using the raw data instead of the rounded per cents, 2 out of 10 Reading teachers at the F level, 4 out of 10 at the S level, and 7 out

Table III

Training of the Reading Teacher

	Certified Teacher	%	Formal Training	%
Federal	26	96	22	82
State	358	84	262	62
City/County	125	19	44	7

of 10 at the C-C level do not have professional training for the instruction they are giving. Although the motivation and interest of these untrained Reading teachers may be of the highest quality, it would seem axiomatic that both the teachers and the inmates are entitled to a background of training that goes beyond trial and error.

Those teachers reporting that they have help of an employee/volunteer--paid/unpaid nature report a median number of 2 at all three levels and in all but one classification--paid volunteers. The figures in Table IV should be recognized as mutually exclusive in almost all of the returned questionnaires. The great majority of the responses noted employees or volunteers in only one of the four classifications, and many of those institutions reporting the existence of a Reading program listed no teacher help of any kind.

This lack of help for the teacher may be the result of various causes. Three which are immediately possible are 1.) a lack of funds to pay such help, 2.) a lack of interest from volunteers, and 3.) the insecurity of an untrained

Table IV

Numbers of Employees and Volunteers

	Institutional Employees	Corporation Employees	Paid Volunteers	Unpaid Volunteers
Federal	2	2	1	2
State	2	2	2	2
City/County	2	2	1	2

Reading teacher trying to direct the involvement of either an employee or a volunteer.

Virtually all of the institutions that have Reading programs permit an inmate to receive Reading instruction through his own request. However, the per cent of institutions that require an inmate to receive Reading instruction for one reason or another, usually an unsatisfactory level of achievement on a standardized test, presents a less positive correlation.

Table V

Manner in which Inmate Becomes Involved

	Inmate Request	%	Institutional Requirement	%
Federal	27	100	18	67
State	352	83	247	58
City/County	135	20	44	6

At the F level, one out of three institutions report that they do not require an inmate to receive Reading instruction; at the S level, approximately two out of five;

and at the C-C level, approximately nineteen out of twenty.

As the work assignment of the inmate is related to Reading, it is hypothesized that learning to read should be his or her work. And at the very least, his work assignment should be reduced by the amount of time spent in the Reading program. But the findings shown in Table VI do not indicate that that is the case.

Table VI

Relationship of Work to Reading

	Reading = Work	%	Reading + Work	%
Federal	12	67	9	50
State	157	37	170	40
City/County	26	4	67	10

The per cents shown in Table VI apply only to inmates reading below the fifth grade level who volunteer or are required by the institution to take Reading. As may be seen by the per cents in which involvement in Reading is in addition to the inmate's work, the inmate reading at the fifth grade level or below faces a 40-50% chance that his Reading instruction is in addition to his work. In those cases where it is required, this can demand strenuous mental exertion from an individual who is already physically tired. And where the inmate volunteers, his motivation to learn to read must be strong enough for him to attend when he is tired as well as being willing to forego entertainment

and athletic activities which conflict. Both situations are unconducive to the perpetuation of a positive attitude toward and successful involvement in a Reading program.

The respondents reported using diagnostic tests, trial lessons, and informal reading inventories as single methods or in combination as they attempted to determine the instruction methods and materials to be used. At all three institutional levels, however, the diagnostic test was the most frequently used. Further, as may be seen in Table VII A, the per cents reported for diagnostic testing correspond more closely to the per cents given for Reading teachers with formal training than they do with the per cent of certified teachers. Although the figures do not correlate

Table VII. A. Determination of Instruction Method

	Diagnostic Test		Trial Lesson		Informal Inventory	
Federal	22	82 %	12	44 %	15	56 %
State	300	70	111	26	209	49
City/County	83	12	44	7	61	9

exactly, they are close enough to indicate further that formal training for the Reading teachers would be beneficial.

The materials available to the Reading teacher, Table VII B, tend to correlate strongly at all institutional levels with the per cent of institutions reporting Reading programs in newspapers, magazines, books for free reading,

Table VII. B.

Materials Available**

	Newspapers	Magazines	Books/Free Reading	Graded Readers	Workbooks	Difficulty Levels (S.R.A. Type)	Sight-Sound Projection (Aud-X Type)	Tachistoscope (Tach-X Type)	Speed Reading (Controlled Reader Type)
Federal	93	85	100	56	93	96	85	70	74
State	63	71	78	39	77	77	62	46	53
C-C	18	20	21	9	15	12	6	4	5

**Shown as per cents

workbooks, and materials with difficulty levels (S.R.A.-type).

The use of the first three of these materials is noted to be student-initiated and student-directed for the most part. And the workbook and difficulty level materials are highly sequenced with each lesson following the preceding one, which would enable a teacher without adequate training to start an inmate on a set of lessons and let the sequence dictate the speed and direction of instruction. It is also noted that the graded readers are the least favorite type of materials at the F and S levels. And it is possible, if not probable, that the graded readers would have been the least favorite at the C-C level if the expense of sight-sound projection, tachistoscopic projection, and speed reading projection had not been financially prohibitive to C-C facilities.

This finding indicates the need for the development and presentation of Reading instruction that is both within the financial ability of the institution and the interest-ability scope of the inmates.

The frequency of instruction, the length of the instruction, and the length of time that the program continues must be in balance or it is unlikely that the inmate will be successful in learning to read. Sessions presented spasmodically or spaced too far apart will break the continuity of the instruction. Sessions that are too short to allow the accomplishment of the reading skills or too long to sustain interest will be self-defeating. And, instruction given for such a short duration that the time of involvement does not provide adequate time for the accomplishment of the purpose will be characterised by progress rather than achievement.

The figures in Table VIII represent the most frequently reported time characteristics. In each case the numbers given were strongly favored over the other choices.

In all three institutional levels and at the three instructional levels for the programs reported, five sessions per week were cited. Four sessions per week was the next frequent choice. Again, for all levels of institutions and instruction, 60 minutes per day was reported most frequently. Fifty minutes per day was the second choice. As might be expected, the F and S institutions reported that the length of inmate involvement was longer than at the C-C institutions. The F and S institutions noted a 3-12 month involvement while

Table VIII

Time Characteristics of Reading Programs
(Most Frequently Reported Figures)

	Program	Days/Week	Minutes/Day	Average Length
Federal	Beginning Develop'l Advanced	5	60 or more	3-12 mos.
State	Beginning Develop'l Advanced	5	60 or more	3-12 mos.
City/County	Beginning Develop'l Advanced	5	60 or more	1 day- 3 mos.

the C-C reported a program duration of 3 months or less.

The figures suggest at least two areas of improvement, and both are related to the magnitude of the inmate Reading problems noted above. First, for the inmate to be conscious of success and growth in Reading, two sessions per day may likely be needed. Second, a program that does not involve the inmate for longer than a year may be able to show genuine progress toward the accomplishment of Reading without achieving it in reality. This is true even if the program includes background information on the education of the inmate, a professionally trained Reading teacher, released time for the Reading instruction, and adequate materials. It is even more

necessary if any of these elements is not present.

The number of inmates who are actually involved in Reading compared to the number of eligible inmates was of necessity based upon data that was less complete than the number of institutions responding would indicate. Although the number of institutions that declined to report figures for inmates involved-eligible was not large, it was compounded by those that reported a quantity for only one of the two classifications. Since both numbers were necessary for the comparison, only those institutions reporting for both were used. The figures shown in Table IX, however, still indicate a general proportion of the inmates who are involved and who are eligible.

Table IX

Numbers of Inmates Involved-Eligible

	Involved	Eligible	%
Federal	2,153	5,304	41
State	21,640	39,256	55
City/County	3,154	7,830	40

Approximately 40-55% of the eligible inmates are being involved in Reading. This should neither serve as a source of jubilation nor despair. If these figures are compared to the per cent of inmates having completed 6 years or less of education (Table I.B.) it will be noted that the involvement per cents exceed those in Table I.B. at each level. And, if it be assumed that these are the only individuals who really

need Reading instruction, then the goal has been surpassed. Conversely, if the 40-55% is to be compared to the 100% possible, the full implementation of inmate Reading programs is less than half completed.

The correct interpretation lies between these two extremes. The totals shown in Table I.B. for inmates having an educational background of 6th grade or below, plus the numbers given in the grades 7-9 column, would give a 60-70% range of inmates who could benefit from further Reading instruction. Of course, not all inmates in this grouping would be deficient in Reading. But statistics on Adult Literacy published by the U.S. Office of Education state that in the general population of individuals 17 years or older slightly more than 50% are either functionally incompetent (22%) or marginally competent (32%). (Northcutt:6)

Thus, a 60-70% inmate approximation would appear to be reasonable. And, on this basis, the involvement of 40-55% of inmates reaches only two out of three who need Reading instruction. If accurate inmate data could be obtained from all institutions, particularly those institutions without Reading programs who did not respond, it is anticipated that the comparison of those involved with those eligible would be even less favorable.

The institutions that reported the existence of Reading programs almost unanimously stated that records were kept of the inmate's progress. Approximately half indicated

that other educational programs were available to the inmate; and the sources of funding were consistently associated with the governmental level of the institution.

SUMMARY

Information on Inmates

More institutions report that they have information on the educational background of the inmate than indicate that Reading instruction is offered to the inmate. At the Federal level 27 institutions cite such educational background information compared to 27 institutions that offer a Reading program. At the State level, the comparison is 405/382; at the City-County level, 197/148. More important, virtually 100% of those institutions reporting a Reading program also indicated corresponding information regarding the education of the inmate. It is obvious that a failure to have this correspondence would show many Reading programs without educational information and quantities of information not being put to any usefulness.

Although the above is one of the strong points of the findings, the weak counterpart is that neither background information nor a Reading program for inmates exists in approximately 5% of the State institutions and 70% of the City-County institutions that responded. The probability that an institution with neither background information nor a Reading program to report would be less likely to return the questionnaire, and the fact that 32% of the State institutions and 84% of the City-County institutions did not respond, suggests that this situation could not reasonably be expected to be better than the statistical results, and may, if complete results were possible, be much worse.

The median per cent of inmates reported to have finished an education of 6th grade level or below is approximately 30% at each of the governmental levels. This, coupled with the research findings noted in the introduction of this study that between 75-80% of the inmates are reading below the level of their education, indicates the necessity of including basic Reading instruction in any Reading program that is offered to them.

The Federal and State institutions report that they rely most heavily on Academic Records for their judgment of the last grade attended (F-56%; S-63%). Although the City-County institutions rely most heavily on inmate statements (26%), the use of diagnostic tests, trial lessons, and informal reading inventories noted below would be likely to place the inmate at his proper reading level more accurately than either the Academic Records or the Inmate Statements.

The findings relative to the grade levels at which Reading instruction is offered show a strong correlation between the number of institutions reporting a Reading program at each of the governmental levels and instruction at grade levels 1-3, 4-6, and 7-above. The results show that slightly less instruction is given at the 7-above grade level in Federal, State, and City-County institutions.

When the per cent of Reading teachers with formal training in the teaching of Reading is compared to the per cent of institutions in which Reading is offered, the findings show that approximately 20% of the Federal Reading

teachers, 40% at the State level, and 70% at the City-County level do not have professional training in the teaching of Reading.

The median numbers of employees and volunteers to aid the Reading teacher is typically 2 from the following categories: institutional employee, corporation employee, paid volunteer, or unpaid volunteer. However, most Reading teachers did not report having any aid of this type.

Although almost all facilities reporting a Reading program also report that an inmate may receive Reading instruction by requesting it, one out of three Federal institutions, two out of five State institutions, and nineteen out of twenty City-County institutions report that they do not require an inmate to receive Reading instruction.

If an inmate is reading below the 5th grade level and volunteers for the Reading program, or is required to receive Reading instruction by the institution, he or she is required to receive this instruction in addition to his work assignment in 40-50% of the Federal and State institutions reporting.

The method used for determining which level of instruction shall be offered is reported to be through diagnostic test, trial lesson, and/or informal reading inventories. Most respondents noted a combination of at least two, and many reported using all three. The per cents for the use of the diagnostic test were the most frequent, and

correlated more strongly to the per cents reported for formally trained Reading teachers than for those who were only certified.

The per cent of institutions using newspapers, magazines, books for free reading, workbooks, and materials with difficulty levels (S.R.A.- type) correlated strongly with the number of institutions reporting a Reading program. The graded readers were the least used materials at the Federal and State levels and were reported only slightly more than the more expensive Aud-S type, Tach-X type, and Controlled Reader-type projection equipment at the City-County level.

For Beginning, Developmental, and Advanced programs at all three governmental levels, the institution reported 5 days per week and 60 minutes per day most frequently. Four days per week and 50 minutes per day were given as much less frequent second choices. At the Federal and State levels, the average length of inmate involvement in the Reading program was 3-12 months; at the City-County level, 1 day-3 months.

The number of inmates involved in Reading instruction compared to the number eligible is approximately 40% at the Federal level, 55% at the State level, and 40% at the City-County level.

Records are almost always kept of the inmate's progress. Approximately one-half of the institutions indicated other educational programs that were available. And, the source

of funding for the Reading program was consistently associated with the governmental level of the institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A NATIONAL OR SEVERAL REGIONAL CENTERS FOR THE AUDIO-VIDEO INSTRUCTION OF READING FOR INMATES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

Reading instruction should be made available to all inmates who are operating at a reading ability below literacy level. Literacy, as used here, is "the ability to use skills and knowledge with the functional competency of meeting the requirements of adult living." (U.S. Office of Education:1975) If the concept needs quantification, the grade level of 5.0, which is the most frequently reported level under which an inmate is required by the institution to receive Reading instruction, seems a reasonable level.

More institutions report the existence of information on the educational background of the inmate than report a Reading program in operation. This information should be expanded to include, if it does not already, the achievement in Reading that the inmate has attained.

Reading programs are reported in operation at 100% of the Federal institutions and 90% of the responding State institutions. At the City-County level, 22% of the facilities reported Reading programs. However, it must also be noted that of 4110 City-County institutions surveyed, only 5% returned the questionnaire stating that they had a Reading program. Either figure indicates room for improvement.

Any solution must take into consideration the characteristics of the City-County institutions--the relatively

short amount of time the inmate is incarcerated, the frequently small inmate populations, the expense of providing such Reading programs, and the time elements that would be necessary to accomplish the purpose of the instruction. Further, such a solution must be available to the institutions that choose to receive it and not interfere with the Reading programs already in existence. Lipton, et al., state that "Offenders are largely school dropouts, educationally disadvantaged, and hold strong negative feelings toward formal education, and probably require special rather than standard educational programs." (p.362)

One possible approach is the presentation of Reading instruction through audio-video transmission which would permit a small number of instructors to reach large numbers of inmates. This telecommunication could be a live presentation which would allow direct and immediate questions and answers, such as is used in some university continuing education courses in which the professor is in a classroom on the campus and the students meet in a room equipped for the reception of the instruction in another location.

Such a program would provide the personal interaction and encouragement that would be advantageous to the success of the program while permitting one instructor to interact with 5 or 6 class groups of inmates per day. It also lowers the expense of such a Reading program to the cost of transmission plus a share of the cost for the instructor.

The latter could be further reduced through the utilization of graduate students who could meet the practicum and apprenticeship requirements of their graduate programs by participating in the program.

Further, the ratio of inmates eligible to receive Reading instruction to the inmate actually involved could be greatly improved if penal institutions that already have Reading programs used this approach to supplement their programs.

A NATIONAL OR SEVERAL REGIONAL CENTERS FOR THE TRAINING OF READING TEACHERS WITH A SPECIAL COMPETENCE IN THE TEACHING OF READING TO INMATES AT THE BEGINNING (1-3), DEVELOPMENTAL (4-6), AND ADVANCED (7-ABOVE) LEVELS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

Although the per cent of certified teachers presenting Reading instruction to inmates corresponds quite strongly to the per cent of institutions which report a Reading program (F-96/100; S-84/90; C-C-19/22), there is need for improving the professional training for the teaching of Reading. The ratio of the per cents of formally trained Reading teachers is F-82/100; S-62/90; C-C-7/22.

It is further noted that the use of a diagnostic test, already the most frequently reported approach for determining instruction method, would be more likely to yield accurate placement information as well as areas for remediation than trial lessons or informal reading inventories.

But, the proper administration and interpretation of a diagnostic test compared to the per cent of teachers with formal training in the teaching of Reading corresponds more strongly (F-82/82; S-70/62; C-C-12/7) than the per cents for teachers who are only certified.

THE INMATE SHOULD RECEIVE READING INSTRUCTION UNDER CONDITIONS THAT MAKE SUCCESS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT PROBABLE. THESE INCLUDE THE REQUIREMENT THAT INMATES WITH LESS THAN LITERACY SKILLS SHOULD RECEIVE READING INSTRUCTION; RELEASED TIME FROM WORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION; READING INSTRUCTION AT BEGINNING, DEVELOPMENTAL AND ADVANCED LEVELS; TIME CHARACTERISTICS APPROPRIATE TO MINUTES PER DAY, DAYS PER WEEK, AND DURATION OF THE PROGRAM; AND APPROPRIATE METHODS AND MATERIALS.

The existence of educational background information already reported for operating programs should be continued to additional programs, as should the range of levels of instruction that has been noted. The institution, however, should require that inmates reading below literacy levels be involved in a Reading program.

The pressures against receiving Reading instruction which may come from guards, work supervisors, peers, and the inmate's own desires may likely overcome his or her motivation if the entire decision is left to the inmate. Further, the $10-15,000 annual expenditure for the incarceration of an inmate should yield more than the completion

of a daily work assignment when literacy skills are absent and the potential for their acquisition is present. The requirement that these inmates shall receive Reading instruction should be coupled with released time from work assignments for such involvement.

For the inmate to achieve literacy skills, it will be necessary in many cases for Reading instruction to be given for more than one 60 minute session per day and for longer than 3-12 months. This is true even if the instruction is given under optimum conditions. Since many inmates are released on parole before they could have received enough instruction to achieve literacy, it is further recommended that literacy education be continued through such community adult basic education classes as they are available.

The findings show that approximately 30% of the inmates have an educational level of 6th grade or below and a need for Reading instruction at the Beginning (1-3), Developmental (4-6), and Advanced (7-above) levels. It is also evident that graded readers, such as are commonly used in elementary and middle grade classrooms are the least chosen materials, with the exception of the City-County institutions where they are chosen slightly more often than the more expensive electric projection equipment.

An approach which suggests the provision of materials such as newspapers, magazines, and books for free reading is unrealistic. If the inmate were capable of accomplishing the ability to read by teaching himself or through the

incidental exposure to printed materials, he or she would likely have achieved it before reaching a penal institution. Thus, materials that provide structure and sequence without precluding the teacher's opportunity to deal with specific interests or problems are needed. These materials should be of a high interest-low vocabulary nature. Given the population by which they are to be utilized, they should provide small units of work that may be completed during an instruction period as well as an opportunity for the inmate to proceed at his or her own rate.

CONCLUSION

The question addressed in this study is--Do the Reading programs offered to inmates include characteristics that would make success in learning to read a reasonable expectation. The answer, as shown by the findings is neither an unqualified Yes nor No. There are identifiable strengths and weaknesses in the programs currently in operation. When separated from the historical dichotomy of Punishment or Rehabilitation, the objective may be seen correctly as that of literacy. In this light, the study suggests that there are solutions. And those solutions are possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Carter, Robert M., McGee, Richard A., and Nelson, E. Kim, Corrections in America. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippincott, 1975.

Doll, Edgar Arnold, "Education of Juvenile Delinquents." Journal of Juvenile Research, Vol. 6.

Dorney, William Patrick, "The Effectiveness of Reading Instruction in the Modification of Attitudes of Adolescent Boys." The Journal of Educational Research, Vol 60, No. 10, 1967.

Eichron, John R., "Delinquency and the Educational System." in Herbert C. Quay, Editor, Juvenile Delinquency: Research and Theory. Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand Company, Incorporated, 1965.

Glueck, Eleanor and Glueck, Sheldon, Delinquency in the Making. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952.

Goltz, Charles, "Individualized Remedial Reading for Boys," Reading Teacher, Vol. 9, October, 1955.

Holloway, Ruth Love, The Reading Crisis in America. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973.

Kvaraceus, William C., "Reading: Failure and Delinquency," Today's Education, N.E.A. Journal, Vol. 60, October, 1971.

Larson, Darnett, "Experiment in Delinquency Prevention and Correction," in Joseph S. Roucek, Editor, Juvenile Delinquency. New York: Philosophical Library, 1958.

Lipton, Douglas, Martinson, Robert, and Wilks, Judith, The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975.

Miller, Wilma H., and Windhauser, Eileen, "Reading Disability: Tendency Toward Delinquency?" Clearing House, Vol. 46, No. 3, November, 1971.

Northcutt, Norvell, Adult Functional Competency: A Summary. U.S. Office of Education, March, 1975.

Raspberry, William, "Prisons A Big Financial Load," The Washington Post, quoted in the Kalamazoo Gazette, Kalamazoo, Michigan, January 9, 1976.

Silberberg, Norman E. and Silberberg, Margaret C.,"School Achievement and Delinquency," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 41, No. 1.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: March '72. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 243. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972.

U.S. News and World Report, "Big Change in Prisons: Punish--Not Reform," August 25, 1975.

Vachon, Brian, "Hey Man, What Did You Learn in Reform School?" Saturday Review--Education, September, 1972.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Information on Inmates

1. Does your institution have information regarding the last grade level of school that the inmate attended:

   Comments:_____ Yes No

2. If so, approximately what per cent of the total inmate population have as the highest grade attended:

   Grades 1-3_____% 4-6____% 7-9____% 10-12____% College_____%

3. The answers given in Question 2 are based upon:

   _____ Test results
   Which test? _____

   _____ Academic records

   _____ Statements by the inmate

   _____ Other _____

Instruction

4. Is instruction in Reading offered to the inmates at your institution?

   Comments:_____ Yes No

5. Does the Reading program offered at your institution include instruction for those who are:

   _____ Illiterate or barely literate (Grade level 1-3)

   _____ Literate but still below the level required to read a newspaper or a magazine such as the Reader's Digest (4-6)

   _____ Able to read newspapers, popular magazines (7 and above)

6. Is the person in charge of the Reading program a certified teacher?

   Comments:_____ Yes No

7. Does the person in charge have formal training in the teaching of Reading? Yes No

8. If so, please indicate courses.

   _____ _____ _____

9. Including the person in charge, how many of the people who present Reading instruction are:

_____ Employees of the institution

_____ Employees of a corporation or organization which provides the Reading instruction

_____ Volunteers who nevertheless receive some remuneration

_____ Volunteers who receive no remuneration

_____ Other _____

10. May the inmate receive Reading instruction by requesting it? Yes No

11. Does the instruction require that some inmates receive Reading instruction? Yes No

12. If so, on what criteria?

Test:_____ Level required to pass:_____

Other _____

13. If the inmate is required to take Reading instruction, or if he volunteers and is reading at the 5th grade level or below, please check the appropriate statement.

_____ The Reading program is considered to be his work assignment.

_____ The Reading program is in addition to his work assignment.

_____ Other _____

14. How is it decided which instruction should be presented?

_____ Diagnostic test _____ Informal Reading Inventory

_____ Trial lesson _____ Other _____

15. Please check if the materials for the Reading program include:

_____ Newspapers _____ Magazines _____ Books for free reading

_____ Graded readers(Basals) of the classroom series type
If so: Title/pub. _____

_____ Workbooks, exercises to be completed

_____ Materials with difficulty levels (S.R.A. type)

_____ Sight-sound projection (Aud-X type)

_____ Tachistoscopes (Tach-X type)

_____ Speed reading (Controlled Reader type)

_____ Other _____

16. On the spaces provided, please indicate the level or type of instruction for each of the programs that you have. I.e., Beginning (grades 1-3); Developmental (4-6); or Advanced (7 and above). Please use whatever terms describe your programs best, and circle the correct information under that heading.

Program _____	_____	_____
Days per week	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Minutes per day	20 or less 30 40 50 60 or more	20 or less 30 40 50 60 or more	20 or less 30 40 50 60 or more
Ave. length inmate stays in program	1 day - 3 mo. 3 - 12 mo. 1 - 2 yrs. More than 2 yrs.	1 day - 3 mo. 3 - 12 mo. 1 - 2 yrs. More than 2 yrs.	1 day - 3 mo. 3 - 12 mo. 1 - 2 yrs. More than 2 yrs.

17. Approximately what is the average number of inmates receiving Reading instruction on any given day? (Total of all programs) _____

18. Approximately what is the average number of inmates who are eligible for the Reading program on any given day? _____

19. Are records kept of the inmates' progress? Yes No

20. Does the institution offer another education program which follows the Reading program?

    Comments: _____ Yes No

21. Is the source of funding for the Reading program

    _____ Federal _____ State _____ City/County

    _____ Other _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: (Please indicate any information that you would find helpful also.)

Institution _____ State _____

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Washington, D. C.
DATE: August 31, 1973

TO : SUPERVISORS OF EDUCATION

Nathaniel A. Fisher

FROM : Nathaniel A. Fisher
Acting Branch Administrator, Southeast Region

SUBJECT: Survey of Reading Programs

In a continuing effort to give assistance to outside researchers and to supply information that will hopefully identify strengths and weaknesses of reading programs in our facilities, attached is a questionnaire from Dr. Ted K. Kilty who is Assistant Professor of Reading at Western Michigan University and Director of Reading Programs for Suffolk County House of Correction.

Please complete questionnaire and forward to the following address:

Ted K. Kilty, Ph.D.
2430 Sangren Hall
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Realizing that these type surveys take time from your other duties and do inconvenience you to an extent, your cooperation in this project will be appreciated.

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

Cavalier PUBLISHING HOUSE

NATIONAL PUBLISHERS OF HEALTH EDUCATION INFORMATION 1611 EIGHTH PL., MCLEAN, VA. 22101 (703) 356-0618

ANTHONY JAMES DELPOPOLO, SR.
MANAGING EDITOR

June 27, 1974

AN OPEN LETTER TO MY FRIENDS IN CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ---

I have recently read a preliminary report of a study made on "The Characteristics of Reading Programs in Federal Institutions" by Dr. Ted K. Kilty, Associate Professor of Read at Western Michigan University and Director of Reading Programs for Suffolk County House of Correction. To me this survey is a most comprehensive and enlightening research and a most worthwhile contribution to the field of Correctional Education.

In the second phase of his survey Dr. Kilty plans to examine the reading programs in correctional institutions at the state, county and local levels. He is approaching his entire study in a completely objective manner.

We are all fully aware of a person's need for reading skills, in and out the prison society. With the assistance of those of us in Corrections and Correctional Education, the reading needs and interests of those inmates confined within our institutions may be appropriately assessed. Valid information such as this will no doubt assist us in implementing more effective reading programs for all.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and forward to Dr. Kilty at the address below:

Ted K. Kilty, Ph. D.
2430 Sangren Hall
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Realizing that these type surveys take time from our duties and do inconvenience you to an extent, your cooperation in this most significant project will be most appreciated.

Yours in Corrections,

Anthony J. DelPopolo, Sr.

Anthony J. DelPopolo, Sr.
Former President
Correctional Education Association

AJD:4